02232

1968/10/28

9b

Department of State TELEGRAM

~~SECRET~~

ACTION COPY

00 RUEHC RUFNCR
DE RUMJIR 41323 3020820
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 280750Z OCT 68 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3334
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2595
STATE GRNC
BT
~~S E C R E T~~ SAIGON 41323

9070Q
Oct 28, 1968
7:38AM

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 91-482
By jw, NARA, Date 5-18-92

~~NODIS/KARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS~~

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT THIEU OCTOBER 28.

SAIGON 41323

2. I DECIDED TO MEET ALONE WITH THIEU ON THE LATEST VERSION OF THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT IN ORDER TO HAVE A FULL AND FRANK TALK ABOUT THE TEXT IN RELATION TO WHERE HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT STAND AS WE MOVE DOWN TOWARD WHAT MAY BE AN EARLY AGREEMENT WITH HANOI. BERGER ACCOMPANIED. I ALSO WANTED TO TAKE UP WITH HIM MY CONTINUED AND GROWING ANNOYANCE AND IRRITATION WITH FURTHER STATEMENTS AND INSPIRED LEAKS HERE, WHICH ARE ANYTHING BUT HELPFUL.

2. I OPENED BY SAYING THAT WASHINGTON WELCOMED HIS AND KY'S SUGGESTIONS AT OUR LAST MEETING FOR CHANGES IN THE DRAFT JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, AND HAD AMENDED THE LAST VERSIONS TO GIVE EFFECT TO THESE CHANGES, THE MAIN ONE OF WHICH WAS TO ELABORATE THE FOURTH PARAGRAPH TO INCLUDE CERTAIN POINTS INTENDED ORGINALLY TO FIGURE IN OUR PRESIDENT'S ACCOMPANYING STATEMENT.
THE RESULT WE THOUGHT WAS A MUCH BETTER AND FULLER JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM EVERY POINT OF VIEW, AND I HOPED IT WOULD MEET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GVN. I DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD GO ANY FURTHER.

3. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT, NOW THAT THERE WAS NO SHADOW OF DOUBT ABOUT THE US OR GVN VIEW OF THE NLF, IF WE STAND TOGETHER IN THE PARIS MEETING, IF VICE PRESIDENT KY COMES OUT IN PUBLIC SUPPORT OF THE JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, IF THIEU AND KY PULL TOGETHER, AND IF IT IS MADE CLEAR TO ALL THAT THE GVN IS WILLING TO TALK TO ANYONE TO DISCOVER A ROAD TO PEACE, I THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY WITH HIS PEOPLE IF HE JOINED TALKS WHICH THE NLF WAS ATTENDING. FINALLY I SAID THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY LOOKING BEYOND THE TALKS TO THE FUTURE, AND I WOULD HOPE THAT HE WOULD SAY SOMETHING TO THEM ALONG THE LINES OF THE "CHARTER FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION" THAT WE HAD TALKED ABOUT.

~~SECRET~~

4. THIEU READ THE NEW DRAFT AND SAID, "I DO NOT SEE HOW WE CAN ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE." HE WILL DISCUSS IT WITH KY AND THE PRIME MINISTER. HE ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING NEW IN THE TALKS WITH HANOI.

5. I HAVE BEEN VAGUE WITH THIEU THIS LAST WEEK ABOUT THE TIMES OF THE PRIVATE MEETINGS AND, IN RESPECT OF SUBSTANCE DISCUSSED, I HAVE LIMITED MYSELF TO SAYING, "THERE IS NOTHING NEW. WE TOLD HANOI WE WOULD STOP THE BOMBING TWO OR THREE DAYS BEFORE THE MEETING, AND WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR HANOI TO GIVE US A DATE. I REPEATED THIS AGAIN THIS MORNING. THIEU ASKED WHY WAS HANOI DELAYING SINCE THERE WAS UNDERSTANDING IN PRINCIPLE ALMOST TWO WEEKS AGO. I SAID I DIDN'T KNOW. IT MAY BE THAT THEY ARE HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE NLF," BERGER INTERJECTED. "IT MAY BE THAT THEY ARE STUDYING THE SIGNS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND US WHICH HAVE APPEARED HERE, AND NOW SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN US, AND CAPITALIZE ON IT," THIEU SAID THEY WOULD CERTAINLY TRY TO DO THAT, AND THIS GAVE ME THE OCCASION TO BRING UP THE SECOND MAIN ITEM I HAD ON MY AGENDA.

6. I SHOWED A BATCH OF PRESS REPORTS AND EDITORIALS FROM THE LOCAL PAPERS ABOUT SO-CALLED DIFFERENCES, AND QUOTED FROM THEM. "LET US DE-AMERICANIZE THE PEACE," (MIN INFORMATION). "GVN WANTS TWO-SIDED TALKS." (PRIMIN). "US PRESSURING GVN." "GVN RESISTING US PRESSURE," ETC.

7. I SAID ALL THIS WAS UNCALLED FOR, UNNECESSARY, AND DANGEROUS. WHILE HE AND I WERE WORKING THINGS OUT QUIETLY, THE US AUTHORITIES WERE SAYING NOTHING, AND IT WAS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS STREAM OF STATEMENTS CONTINUES HERE. IT WILL ONLY CONFUSE THE VIETNAMESE AND COULD MAKE THINGS MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM WHEN THE MEETINGS OPEN.

8. THIEU WAS DEFENSIVE AND APOLOGETIC, BLAMING IT ON THE PRESSURES OF THE PRESS.

9. THIEU ASKED IF HANOI WOULD GIVE US A DATE BEFORE OUR ELECTION. WE SAID WE DIDN'T KNOW, BUT THERE WAS SUCH A POSSIBILITY, IN WHICH CASE THE FIRST MEETING MIGHT WELL TAKE PLACE BEFORE ELECTION DAY--WHICH WAS A WEEK FROM TOMORROW.

10. I SAID WE WERE UNABLE TO GO ANY FURTHER IN MEETING THE GVN NEEDS THAN THE DRAFT JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT. ALSO, WE COULD NOT MEET THEIR REQUEST FOR PRICEDURAL MEETINGS BEFORE THE MAIN MEETING. THEY HAD THEREFORE TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WERE GOING TO JOIN THE TALKS OR NOT, AND THEY MIGHT HAVE TO DECIDE ON SHORT NOTICE. I SUGGESTED A JOINT MEETING WITH KY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER THIS AFTERNOON TO SEE IF ANY ISSUES REMAIN. WE WILL MEET AT 1700 HOURS. I SAID IF THE GVN RAISES NEW CONDITIONS AND DOES NOT JOIN THE FIRST MEETINRN THIEU SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A DECISION. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THEM, BUT THOUGHT WE WERE PRETTY WELL AGREED NOW BETWEEN US.

11. THIEU THEN ASKED HOW WE THOUGHT THE TALKS WOULD MOVE. WE SAID WE THOUGHT AT AN EARLY STAGE HANOI WOULD PUT IN DEMANDS FOR A CEASE-FIRE, FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE US AND ALLIED FORCES, AND FOR COALITION OR REVISION OF THE CINSTITUTION TO PERMIT COALITIONS. WE SHOULD BE PREPARING OURSELVES URGENTLY FOR DEALING WITH THESE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES.

12. COMMENT: I THINK WE ARE IN THE CLEAR HERE, BUT WILL KNOW FOR CERTAIN AFTER TONIGHT'S JOINT MEETING. I AM FOR DIGGING IN AT THIS POINT, UNLESS THEY COME FORWARD WITH ANY CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS.
BUNKER
BT